

Oregon Department of Justice
FINANCIAL FRAUD/CONSUMER PROTECTION SECTION

SCAM ALERT

Attorney General Rosenblum Announces Top 10 Consumer Complaints List

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum today recognized National Consumer Protection Week (March 1 - 7, 2015) by releasing the Oregon Department of Justice's 2014 list of [Top 10 Consumer Complaints](#). For the first time, the IRS imposter phone scam and magazine subscription fraud topped Oregon's list.

"National Consumer Protection Week is a great time to protect yourself and your family from scammers and fraudsters by signing up for our Scam Alert Network at www.oregonconsumer.gov. You can also call our Consumer Protection Hotline if you need help. Last year, we were able to help over 50,000 Oregonians and prevent thousands more from being scammed. Hot tip: If you receive an unsolicited call saying it's the IRS, hang up! It is a scam," said Attorney General Rosenblum.



Attorney General Ellen
Rosenblum

The top two complaints included IRS imposter calls and magazine subscription fraud, with the IRS imposter calls drawing nearly double the complaints as the next highest category. These two scams were followed by complaints about telecommunication companies, motor vehicle sales, financial services, health related complaints, international money transfer schemes, home ownership issues, collection agencies and hair, nail and skin services. The full list is [here](#).

Oregon has one of the most innovative consumer protection programs in the country. The program operates exclusively on funds recovered from businesses that break the law. In 2014 alone, Oregon DOJ obtained more than \$2.6 million in refunds for Oregonians, without spending any taxpayer funds.

Health Spas

After topping our list last year complaints about hair, nail and skin services dropped 77%, thanks in large part to actions taken by the Oregon DOJ to hold the health spa Forever Young accountable for their unlawful business practices. Last month, Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum fined the now defunct company \$500,000 for charging customers for services that were never delivered.

IRS Imposter Calls

With a total of 1,340 complaints, IRS Imposter Calls caused a major headache for Oregonians. Looking to take advantage of people during a busy tax season, scammers tell victims over the phone that they owe money to the IRS or Oregon Department of Revenue. The caller demands that the person pay the money immediately through a temporary debit card or

a wire transfer. If the victim refuses to pay, they are then threatened with arrest, deportation or suspension of a business or driver's license. In many cases, the caller becomes aggressive and insulting.

Magazine Subscription Fraud

New to the list this year, magazine subscription scams accounted for 735 consumer complaints. Scammers solicit subscription renewals door to door or through the mail at a price significantly higher than the actual cost, and usually fail to ever deliver the subscriptions. The Oregon DOJ currently has an investigation open into this scam and has worked with several victims to recover their money.

If you think you have fallen victim to a fraud or scam, contact the Oregon Department of Justice online at www.oregonconsumer.gov or call 1-877-877-9392.